

Serial No. 10/088,260

Art Unit: 1751

DISCUSSION

Before discussing the rejection over the prior art, Applicants deem it prudent to set forth what they consider to be their invention. As presently claimed, invention is a detergent tablet. The detergent tablet comprises

- (a) a surfactant component selected from a group consisting of anionic surfactants, nonionic surfactants and amphoteric surfactants and mixtures thereof;
- (b) a non-enzymatic protein and/or derivative thereof in an amount of from 0.1% to 10% by weight based on the weight of the tablet;
- (c) a zeolite; and
- (d) a disintegrating agent.

The dependent claims are directed to compositions which specify the amount of the surfactant, the amount of the non-enzymatic protein, the amount of the zeolite and the amount of the disintegrating agent present in the tablet.

The application is also directed to a process for making a solid-formed detergent tablet which imparts a soft feel onto clothes treated therewith. The process comprises forming a mixture of the surfactants, the non-enzymatic protein, zeolite and the disintegrating agent and forming the mixture into a tablet.

The claims dependent upon the process claim 21 are directed to tablets containing various proportions of the ingredients.

Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art reference, U.S. 6,051,554 (Lang et al.) neither teaches nor suggests the present invention.

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Claims 11-13, 15-23 and 25-30 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Lang et al. (U.S. 6,051,544). Applicants respectfully submit that Lang et al. neither teaches nor suggests the present invention.

The Examiner's characterization of the Lang et al. disclosure in the first three lines of the paragraph under section 5 is correct. At this point the Examiner states:

"Lang et al disclose a granular secondary alkane sulfonate and an additive, which can be converted into a solid extrudate for a washing bar, toilet blocks or bar soaps, to give pressed articles, e.g. tablets or compacts (abstract; col. 3, lines 9-12)."

Applicants respectfully submit that this is the only reference in Lang et al. to tablets. However, this portion of the specification only refers to forming the tablets from the pulverulent or granular SAS according to the invention. Applicants submit that nowhere in Lang et al. is there any teaching or suggestion to form tablets from a mixture of an anionic surfactant, a nonionic surfactant, an amphoteric surfactant or mixtures thereof with a non-enzymatic protein in an amount of 0.1% to 10% by weight, a zeolite and a disintegrating agent.

Applicants submit that Lang et al. is directed to forming a granular secondary alkane sulfonate comprising a finely divided, solid secondary alkane sulfonate and an additive. The additive is utilized to prevent the finely divided alkane sulfonate from agglomerating due to its hydroscopic nature.

Applicants respectfully submit that they have thoroughly perused Lang et al. and can find no teaching or suggestion to combine the finely divided alkane sulfonate and

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the additive with other surfactants, non-enzymatic proteins and derivatives thereof, zeolites and disintegrating agents and forming the combination into a tablet.

In addition, Applicants can find no reference in Lang et al. to a disintegrating agent. Since Lang et al. provides a finely divided alkane sulfonate coated with a material which prevents the articles from agglomerating, there is probably no need in the composition for a disintegrating agent since the particles do not stick together.

Page 3, section 5, the Examiner is correct in stating: "the secondary alkane sulfonates can be used in the finished detergent and cleaning product formulations in combination with other surfactants (col. 3, lines 14-17) like anionic surfactant and additives such as fatty acid protein condensation products obtained by reaction of fatty acid chlorides with oligopeptides (col. 4, lines 6-61). The total concentration of surfactants, including the secondary alkane sulfonate are from 1 to 99% by weight; and additives such as cellulose derivatives are from 0.1 to 105 by weight based on the weight of the alkane sulfonate (col. 3, lines 1-3)".

Applicants respectfully submit that this portion of the specification is directed to the additives which are utilized to coat the secondary alkane sulfonates to prevent them from agglomerating.

Applicants submit that they have thoroughly perused Lang et al. and can find no teaching or suggestion to form a tablet comprising the additive coated granulate secondary alkyl sulfonate, a non-enzymatic protein or protein derivative, a zeolite and a disintegrator and forming the mixture into a tablet.

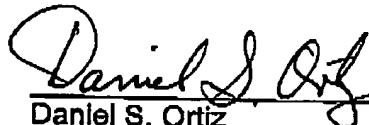
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Applicants would appreciate the Examiner's directing them to the portion of the Lang et al. reference which discloses forming extrudates, pressed articles or compacts or extrudates and pressed articles such as washing bars, bar soaps, toilet blocks, tablets or compacts (rolls) made from anything other than the coated secondary alkane sulfonates.

In view of the above discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that a rejection under 35 USC 103(a) over Lang et al. is untenable and respectfully request that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Applicants have noted the provisional rejection under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claims of copending Application No. 10/129,807 and 10/130,841 in view of Lang. Since no subject matter has been indicated as allowable, Applicants do not believe that a Terminal Disclaimer is warranted at this time.

Respectfully submitted,



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